



## WGA Policy Resolution 04-12

### *Undesirable Aquatic, Riparian, and Invasive Species*

June 22, 2004

Santa Fe, New Mexico

SPONSOR: Governors Locke and Rounds

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

1. Invasive or undesirable aquatic, riparian and terrestrial species influence the productivity, value, and management of a broad range of land and water resources in the West. These undesirable species have significant negative economic, social and ecological impacts which include, but are not limited to:
  - a. reduction of the yield and quality of desirable crop forage plants;
  - b. poisoning of livestock;
  - c. Reduction of native biodiversity resulting in a growing number of threatened, endangered and extinct species;
  - d. adverse affects upon human health through allergies, poisoning, and harboring vectors;
  - e. degradation of natural aquatic systems including obstruction of water flow in irrigation and drainage systems;
  - f. reduction of the value of streams, lakes, reservoirs, oceans, and estuaries for fish and wildlife habitat, and public water supply;
  - g. high cost of control;
  - h. increase in facilities maintenance costs such as powerplants, water treatment plants, etc.;
  - i. detracting from the aesthetics and recreational value of wildlands, parklands, and other areas; and
  - j. decreased real estate property value and increased costs of property development;
  - k. competition with or transmission of diseases to wild Pacific salmon or other important marine and aquatic species.
2. Undesirable species are those listed on a state or federal recognized list of noxious, nuisance or deleterious species.
3. Aquatic invasive species such as the zebra mussel, giant salvinia, and eurasian water milfoil are spreading into more western water-bodies each year. The most common source for these species is via recreational watercraft movement and from supplies sold by aquatic plant and animal suppliers. No western state has implemented a program that is capable of adequately preventing or reducing the spread of these aquatic invasive species. The economic and environmental damage from aquatic invasive species will continue to rise in western states without a well-organized and

adequately funded effort to implement prevention programs in each state. It is estimated that the cost for control and cleaning for zebra mussels alone where they have already infested waters in the U.S. is \$3 billion. Similarly, Giant Salvinia is choking off waterways including those of the Colorado River.

**B. GOVERNORS-POLICY STATEMENT**

1. The Western Governors recognize that the spread of invasive, undesirable species results from the combination of human behavior, susceptibility of invaded environments, and the biology of the invading species, and that these characteristics are not dictated by geopolitical boundaries, but rather by ecosystem-level components which often span state borders. The Western Governors support coordinated, multistate management and eradication actions preventing the spread, intentional and unintentional introductions, and control of undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species on land and in the water. The principal objectives will be to maintain properly functioning natural systems, agriculture productivity, enhancing resource and environmental protection, and the protection of human health. Control programs will be those that are economically practicable in relationship to the long-term impacts an introduced nuisance species will cause.
2. In pursuit of these objectives, programs for the control and/or eradication of unauthorized, undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species need to incorporate education, prevention, and early detection and rapid response techniques and be based upon Integrated Pest Management (IPM) concepts and practices. IPM involves the use of all suitable techniques, including biological, chemical, physical (mechanical and manual), cultural measures (environmental manipulation), and public awareness programs.
3. The western governors strongly encourage all natural resource land management agencies, local governments, universities and the private sector to collaborate and form partnerships to prevent new unauthorized introductions; for the enhancement, development and implementation of IPM programs; and to work together to find creative new approaches for protecting and restoring natural, agriculture, and recreational resources, including the use of challenge grants.
4. The Western Governors urge full funding support for federal programs that manage invasive species on federal lands and provide assistance to states in the management of invasive species, including the national invasive species act and programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture B Animal, Plant, and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) which provides valuable services in the detection and elimination of undesirable species of

insects and plant diseases. Their services are essential for states relying on trade and export services to maintain strong trade and export functions.

5. The Western Governors recognize the importance of, and need for, a coordinated western regional approach to aquatic invasive species.

**C. GOVERNORS=MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE**

1. This resolution is to be posted on the Western Governors' Association website and it should be referenced and used as appropriate by Governors and staff.
2. The Western Governors Association shall obtain necessary resources and work with appropriate partners to facilitate the development and coordination of western strategies to limit the spread of undesirable aquatic and terrestrial species. The executive director is authorized to obtain federal staff support under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act if necessary in connection with this directive.
3. Of particular importance will be:
  - a. Development and harmonization of uniform, and scientifically based species lists;
  - b. Establishing consistent and effective policies and procedures to prevent transport, sale and dispersal of undesirable species, particularly those under eradication in specific states;
  - c. Development of uniform public educational and awareness media that create effective communication to the public throughout the western states; and
  - d. Facilitation of development of appropriate K-12 school science curricula which recognizes that the introduction, spread and impacts of undesirable species present a serious environmental threat from Abiological pollution® and that engendering environmental stewardship is best accomplished with early education.
4. WGA shall convene an Aquatic Invasive Species Working Group to develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive program to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in the water resources of the western states. The Working Group shall partner with the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species, the Western States Water Council, and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

*This resolution was originally adopted in 1998 as WGA resolution 98-018 and was readopted as 02-21.*